بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The Need For Islamic Education According To The Quran And Sunnah

By

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(Note: The Author is now using her real family name instead of her husband's family name (Mababaya) in conformity with Islamic value -- i.e., for woman to retain her own family name even after marriage.)

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I. The Great Teacher and Educator of Mankind

Islâm stands as the most rational and precise religion that Allâh (swt) has given to the whole mankind. It gives importance to education, which is the process of teaching and acquiring or learning knowledge (which includes beliefs, values, attitudes, manners and skills). In fact, Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) not only as His Final Messenger and the Seal of the Prophets (Qur'an, 33: 40) but also as the Great Teacher (Educator) to mankind. Our Rabb (Cherisher and Sustainer) sent him to teach humanity the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

> ***"Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and Wisdom (Prophet's Sunnah) and teaching you that which you did not know." (Qur'an, 2:151)***
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> ***"Certainly did Allah confer (great) favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book (the Qur'an) and wisdom (the Sunnah) although they had been before in manifest error." (Qur'an, 3:164)***
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> ***"It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book (the Qur'an) and***

wisdom (the Sunnah) although they had been before in manifest error." (Qur'an, 62:2)

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said that he was sent as a teacher. He clearly said:

> *"Allah has not sent me as a self-opinionated (messenger) nor to make others self-opinionated; but as a teacher and to facilitate things for people." (Muslim)*

In another authentic hadith, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) stressed his having been sent as a teacher:

> *Abdullah ibn Amir (r.a.) narrated that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) happened to pass by two groups (of Muslims) in the mosque and he said: "Both of them are good, but one is superior to the other. One group is supplicating Allah and praying Him. If He so wills He will confer upon them and if He so wills He will withhold. So far as those who are acquiring the understanding of religion and its knowledge and are busy in teaching the ignorant, they are superior. Verily, I have been sent as a teacher." He then sat down amongst them. (Tirmidhi, 257 and Darimi)*

As the universal teacher to mankind, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) possesses an exalted standard of character (i.e., sublime morals) (68:4) and is an excellent example for us to follow. Allah (s.w.t.) says:

> *"Indeed in Allah's Messenger (Muhammad) you have an excellent example to follow for him who hopes in (meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much." (33:21)*

In an authentic *Hadîth* we read that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) himself said:

> *Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "I have been sent (as a Messenger) in the best of all generations of Adam's offspring since the Creation." (Bukhari 4/757)*

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), Allah's universal Messenger to all mankind (Qur'an, 34: 28), was the unlettered Prophet (Qur'an, 7: 157) who received the Message by inspiration (Qur'an, 6:145 and 29:45). He had come with the very Truth, and he confirmed the messages of the Messengers before him (Qur'an, 37: 37). He was Allah's Mercy for all creatures (21: 107) for he taught us the Qur'an and the Sunnah (62:2).

It is significant to note that the first revelation that Allâh (swt) revealed to His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) for the guidance of mankind pertains to reading -- *Surah Al-Iqra,* which is Chapter 96 of the Qur'an*. Iqra* means "Read". This is in line with the Prophet's universal role as the teacher (educator) to mankind. Allah (swt) has commanded not only His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) who is our Great Teacher but also the whole mankind to read in His name, meaning to learn knowledge of Islam for His pleasure. Part of the *Surah Al-Iqra* is translated as follows:

> *"Read! In the name of your Rabb (Cherisher and Sustainer), Who created — created man, out of a leech-like clot: Read! And your Rabb is Most Bountiful. He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, taught man that which he knew not." (Qur'an, 96:1-5)*

When we follow the divine commandment to read, we learn in the Qur'ân that aside from reading, Allâh commands us: to know (e.g., 2:194, 196, 203, 223, 235 and 14:52) to learn (e.g., 6: 151, 9:122, 12:2, 22:46 and 54, 40:58 and 68:37), to understand (e.g., 2:44, 6:32, 7:169, 10:16, 11:51, 12:109, 21:10, 40:67, 43:3, 47:24 and 57:17), to ponder (4: 82 and 23:68) or contemplate (38:29), and even to ask questions (i.e., 10:94 and 43:45). To know, learn, understand, ponder

or contemplate, as well as to ask questions constitute what we called the learning process in education. With Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) as Allah's universal teacher and the fact that Allah has enjoined us to learn Islam purely based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah as taught by His Great Messenger (s.a.w.s.), we see the educational aspect of Islam as a complete process of teaching and learning knowledge based on Allah's Divine Guidance. Allah is the One who bestows knowledge and wisdom to whom He pleases. Successful are those whom Allah gives knowledge and wisdom. Allah the Exalted says:

> ***"He grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted receives indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the Message but men of understanding." (Qur'an, 2: 269)***

In line with the above inspiring verse, the world's great teacher and educator, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) , likewise inspired us to learn knowledge of Islam in order to be able to play a role in Islam that pleases Allah. The following authentic Hadith states:

> ***'Abdur Rahman bin Abi Bakra's father (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said: "If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion and of course knowledge is attained by learning." (Bukhari 1/67)***

II. The Importance of Education

Education in Islam plays important role in developing every individual (male or female) to be successful in realizing the very purpose of man's creation -- i.e., to worship Allah until death:

> ***"I created not the jinn and men except that they should worship Me." (Qur'an 51:56)***

> ***"And worship your Rabb until there comes unto you the Hour that is certain (i.e., death)." (Qur'an 15:99)***

The performance of *Salât* (five times daily obligatory prayers) serves as the foundation of Islam. Without it there is no Islam. A person who abandons the prescribed compulsory prayers is not considered a Muslim:

> ***Jabir (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Between a person and disbelief is discarding prayer." (Ahmad, Muslim Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah)***

> ***Burayda ibn Al-Hasib (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "The pact between us and them is prayer. Whoever abandons it is a unbeliever." (Ahmad, Abu Dawud Tirmidhi 574, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah)***

Worship *(Ibaadah)* in Islam does not only mean the prescribed prayers. It is a comprehensive term as Islam is not only a religion but also a comprehensive way of life. Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah (may Allah have mercy in him) explained the meaning of worship as follows:

Al-Ibaadah **(worship) is a comprehensive term that encompasses everything that Allâh loves and is pleased with of statements and actions, outward and inward. Therefore, prayer, *Zakaat*, fasting, pilgrimage, true speech, fulfilling trusts, being kind to parents, keeping the ties of kin, fulfilling promises, ordering good, eradicating evil, making *Jihaad* against the disbelievers and hypocrites, being good to one's neighbor, orphans, poor, wayfarers and owned beings of humans and animals, supplications, remembrance of Allâh, reading the Qur'ân and so forth are all examples of acts of worship. Similarly, loving Allâh and His Messenger, having fear of**

Allâh, turning unto Allâh, making one's religion pure for Allâh alone, being patient with what He has decreed, thanking Him for His bounties, being pleased with His Preordainment, putting one's trust in Him, hoping for His mercy, fearing His punishment and so forth are all forms of worship. (Abdullah bin Jarullah Al-Jarullah, *The Delight of Faith*". Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,1996.)

According to Prof. Dr. Umar S. Al-Ashqar in his book "Belief in Allah in the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah", published by the International Islamic Publishing House, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2000, *Ibaadah* has three pillars or essential components:

1) Purity of intention (*ikhlaas*): whereby a person seeks the Face of his Rabb and the Hereafter...If there is no purity of intention, good deeds are invalidated.

2) Sincerity (*Sidq)*: What we mean by sincerity is sincere resolve, whereby a person strives to obey the commands of Allah and avoid that which He has prohibited, to prepare himself to meet Him and to avoid feeling helpless or being too lazy to obey Allah.

3) Following the Messenger (s.aw.s.): So a person does not worship Allah except according to what Allah has prescribed and what the Messenger (s.aw.s.) brought. When people worship their Rabb without knowledge, this is *bid'ah* against which the Messenger (s.aw.s.) warned us, and condemned those who do it, and said that doing it is misguidance. He said "Every newly-invented thing (in religion) is a *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is a going astray, and every going astray is in the Fire." The one who does acts of *bid'ah* will have his action rejected and it will not be accepted from him. (pp. 422-423)

By performing all the acts of worship as defined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the worshipper actually attains total personality development and, hence, success. Islâm is unique as it truly guides people to succeed both in this world and the world Hereafter. It teaches us the authentic knowledge of attaining real success in the everlasting world to come -- a fruitful success indeed in terms of the underlying eternal rewards. Allâh the Almighty says in the Qur'ân:

> ***"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good (i.e., Islâm), enjoining what is right (Islâmic monotheism), and forbidding what is wrong (polytheism, disbelief, etc.): they are the ones who are the successful." (Qur'an 3:104)***
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> ***"But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness. We shall soon admit them to Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath, to dwell therein forever. Allâh's promise is the truth, and whose word can be truer than Allâh's?" (Qur'an 4:122)***
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> ***"The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil. They observe regular prayers practice regular charity and obey Allâh and His Messenger. On them will Allâh pour His mercy: for Allâh is Exalted in power Wise. Allâh has promised the believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allâh: that is the supreme success." (Qur'an 9:71-72)***
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> ***"Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allâh: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allâh do hearts find satisfaction. For those who believe and work righteousness is (every) blessedness and a beautiful place of (final) return." (Qur'an 13:28-29)***

"The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allâh and His Messenger to judge between them is they say: 'We hear and we obey.' And such are the successful. And whoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger, such are the successful." (Qur'an 24:51-52)

Verily, the Righteous (they will be) in a position of Security, among Gardens and Springs; dressed in fine silk and in rich brocade they will face each other; and We shall join them to Companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes. There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; nor will they there taste death except the first death. And He will save them from the Torment of the Blazing Fire as a bounty from your Rabb! That will be the supreme success!" (Qur'an 44: 51- 57)

From the above Qur'ânic *Ayât* (Verses), we can conclude that the successful are those (men and women) who believe and do righteous deeds. They are the righteous believers who call people to Islâm (i.e., enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong). They are those who obey Allâh (swt) and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.). They will be saved from the torment of the Hell-Fire and dwell in Paradise forever. They will have the greatest bliss to see Allâh (swt).

In line with the above Qur'anic verses are the following authentic *Ahadîth*, which guide us to the right ways of attaining success:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) (radhiallahu anhu) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said "Whoever believes in Allâh and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.), offers prayers perfectly and fasts (the month of) Ramadan then it is incumbent upon Allâh to admit him into Paradise, whether he emigrates for Allâh's cause or stays in the land where he was born." They (the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said "O Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.)! Should we not inform the people of that?" He said "There are one-hundred degrees in Paradise which Allâh has prepared for those who carry on Jihad in His Cause. The distance between every two degrees is like the distance between the sky and the Earth. So if you ask Allâh for anything, ask Him for the Firdaus, for it is the last part of Paradise and the highest part of Paradise, and at its top there is the Throne of Beneficent, and from it gush forth the rivers of Paradise." (Bukhâri 9/519)

Abû Hurairah (r.a.) (or Abû Said Al Khudri, r.a.) narrated that …Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) remarked, "I bear testimony that there is no god but Allâh and I am the Messenger of Allâh. The man who meets his Rabb without harboring any doubt about these two (truths) will never be kept away from Paradise." (Muslim 42)

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Ayyub (r.a.) that a man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and said "Direct me to a deed which draws me near to Paradise and takes me away from the Fire (of Hell)." Upon this he (s.a.w.s.) said "You worship Allâh and never associate anything with Him, establish prayer, and pay Zakat, and do good to your kin. When he turned his back, Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) remarked: if he adheres to what he has been ordered to do, he would enter Paradise." (Muslim 1/13)

Abdullâh ibn Amr ibn Al'As (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said "He is successful who has accepted Islâm, who has been provided with sufficient for his want and been made contented by Allâh with what He has given him." (Muslim 2293)

Abû Dharr (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said "He has been successful whose heart Allâh has made sincere towards faith, whose heart He has made free from unbelief, his tongue truthful, his soul calm, his nature straight, whose

ear He has made attentive and his eye observant. The ear is a funnel and the eye is a repository for what the heart learns. He is successful whose heart is made retentive." (Tirmidhî 5200, Ahmad and Bayhaqi)

The quoted *Ahadîth* (plural of *hadîth*) clearly tell us that the successful are those who sincerely believe in Allâh *(*swt) and His Messenger *(s.a.w.s.)* and do righteous deeds. In other words, the successful are those who faithfully follow Islâm as a religion and a complete way of life. Thus, only authentic knowledge of the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* provides explicit and perfect guidance to attaining eternal success. This is because Islâm is the true religion from Allâh, the Only God and Creator of the Worlds. Allâh the Almighty tells us in the Qur'ân:

"Truly the Religion before Allâh (swt)s Islâm (submission to His Will). Those who were given the Scripture (the Jews and the Christians) did not differ except out of mutual jealousy, after knowledge had come to them. But if any denies the Signs of Allâh, Allâh (swt)s swift in calling to account." (Qur'an 3:19)

As the true religion, Islâm tells us that the only true guidance is the guidance of Allâh (swt). It is Allâh *(*swt) Alone Who guides people to the Truth and the Right Way:

"...Say: 'True guidance is the is the guidance of Allâh ... All bounties are in the hands of Allâh. He grants them to whom He pleases. And Allâh cares for all and He knows all things." (Qur'an 3:73)

"This is the Guidance of Allâh. He gives that guidance to whom He pleases, of His servants if they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would be vain for them." (Qur'an 6:88)

"Those to whom Allâh wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islâm. Those whom He wills to leave straying, He makes their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies; thus does Allâh lay abomination on those who refuse to believe." (Qur'an 6:125)

"Whom Allâh does guide, he is on the right path. Whom He rejects from His guidance, such are the persons who lose." (Qur'an 7:178)

Allâh's Guidance, therefore is the key to success both in this world and the life Hereafter. To be successful, we must know how to seek Allâh's Guidance and the best way to attain this is to have authentic knowledge of Islâm. We have to have sufficient knowledge of the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* so that we know how to practice Islâm wholeheartedly and share it to others for the sole pleasure of Allâh (swt). Indeed, education plays a very vital role in providing authentic knowledge of Islam -- one that is based on the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. It can train every individual who seeks for true success both in this world and in the life hereafter to practice Islam and share it to others.

III. The Relevant Curriculum

To be able to please Allah (swt), we need to know how to worship Him according to the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah. This means that we need authentic knowledge of Islam. Education to be relevant to the needs of the Muslims, must therefore offer the right curriculum in accordance with the very purpose of man's creation. That curriculum has to teach knowledge

as taught to us by Allah's Messenger and Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). The world's Great Teacher and Educator defined knowledge succinctly as shown in the following *Ahâdîth:*

> *Abdullah ibn Amir ibn Al As (r.a.) narrated that Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Knowledge consists of three things: the decisive verses (Qur'an), authentic Hadith and prescriptions rightly deduced from the two. What is beside them is superfluous (extra)." (Ibn Majah 1/54)*
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> *'Abdullâh ibn Amir ibn Al-As (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Knowledge has three categories; anything else is extra; a precise verse, or an established Sunnah (practice), or a firm obligatory duty." (Abu Daud, 2879)*

Shayk 'Abdul 'Azeez bin Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) in his book "Knowledge" defined knowledge comprehensively as follows:

"Knowledge consists of many branches, but according to the scholars of Islam: "What is meant by knowledge in the absolute sense is Islamic knowledge."

This is the intended meaning of knowledge in the book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (s.a.w.s.). In the absolute sense, it is knowledge regarding Allah, His names and attributes, knowledge of His rights over His creation, and what He, the One free from all defects, the Most High, has prescribed for them. It is the detailed knowledge of the path that leads to Allah; knowledge of the purpose of our creation; and the end which the slave will result in, in the Hereafter.

...The greatest and most excellent knowledge is that which pertains to Allah, His names, and His attributes, and this knowledge is known as `*aqeedah* (belief). Indeed to Allah, the exalted and Supreme, belongs the best example which is the highest description in every aspect of His essence, names, attributes and actions.

Following this is that which is related to Allah's right over His creation, what He has prescribed upon them. Following this is what supports and bonds it in understanding such as knowledge of the principles of Arabic, Islamic terminology, principles of *fiqh, haadeeth* (and its) methodology and other sciences which are connected to this knowledge, which assist it in both understanding and precision.

The biography of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), Islamic history, biography of the narrators of hadeeth and of the scholars of Islam are also part of this knowledge (pp. 4-5).

In brief, Shayk bin Baaz defined knowledge as "Allah said..." and "The Messenger said..." which is called *Ilm Shar*; it is the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and all that assist its understanding (1995, p.15).

From the Islamic point of view we can, therefore, say that knowledge means the knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and all that we can deduce from the two as well as those that assist us in understanding them.

To be able to attain a responsive and relevant education, schools, colleges, universities and other learning institutions (whether formal or non-formal) must give importance to Islamic curriculum. It must impart to its learners knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (authentic *Ahâdîth*) as well the right deductions from these two revealed knowledge. Only in this way that education attains its role in developing every human being to fulfill the very purpose of life -- to worship Allah (Qur'an 51:56); and, thus, attain success both in this world and in the

life Hereafter.

One very important subject that has been ignored by educators and curriculum makers is the subject on Da'wah according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This subject is supposed to be taught starting at least in the high school level where the learner has to learn the characteristics of a *da'ee* (one who invites others to Islam); the knowledge to be conveyed to others; and the methodology or techniques of delivering the message of Islam (or inviting others to Islam) in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. By offering this important subject, let say in the senior high school, the student even if he/she desires not to pursue college or higher education, at least learns the basics of doing Da'wah. This subject has to be taught extensively in college not only those who choose Islamic Studies as their specialized field of studies or course but also to all Muslim students. One of the most important duties that we must know in Islâm is the obligation to do *Da'wah*. *Da'wah* is the very *Sunnah* and the very essence of the Prophet's mission, which we must also follow as Muslims. Allah the Almighty says:

> *"Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger and beware (of evil): if you do turn back know you that it is Our Messenger's duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest manner." (5:92)*

> *"Say (O Muhammad): 'This is my Way; I do invite unto Allâh with certain knowledge." I and whoever follows me (must also invite others to the Oneness of Allâh with sure knowledge). Glory to Allâh! And I am not of the polytheists.'" (12: 108)*

In this contemporary world, where there are more extra knowledge (non-Islamic subjects) being offered in most existing schools and institutions for the Muslims than Islamic knowledge (Qur'an and Sunnah), it is imperative for Muslim educators, curriculum and educational policy makers to be united and work for the Islamization of knowledge.

Knowing the importance of Islamic education, Muslim scholars particularly those based in the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia, USA propose the idea of the Islamization of knowledge. Dr. Alwani proposes a cultural strategy which must firmly establish Islam and its vision, not through limited classes on `religion' but throughout the entire education system. According to him every syllabus and program must aim at forming and establishing this belief; we must clear every syllabus of anything that contradicts or opposes this belief. This could be done by reorganizing the education system in all Muslim countries and removing the negative influences of the disparity between religious, secular, civil and military education...to end the segmentation of knowledge. This could be achieved by integrating all existing systems and creating one single system based on the teachings, spirit and vision of Islam. The new education system, its syllabi and methods, and those responsible for it, should all be infused with the principles and aims of Islam (1989, p. 12).

Educators and curriculum makers need to understand the importance of Islamic education and thus support the implementation of the idea of Islamizing knowledge that are non-Islamic or considered as extra knowledge. Mankind need to learn that Islam, as the rational religion and the complete way of life for the whole humanity is never against science and technology and other useful knowledge that develop man's economic and material development and prosperity. Neither is it against other disciplines (e.g., foreign language, human behavior, administration, organization, management) that help build and foster socio-cultural understanding between and among individuals and groups; and universal peaceful co-existence of peace-loving nations and states. What Islam does not like is a knowledge that is not beneficial to man's material and spiritual well-being:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure out of which nothing is spent in the cause of Allâh." (Tirmidhi 280)

Islam is a religion and a complete way of life that offers a well-balanced way of life. It guides us to strive hard to enjoy the material comfort, socio-cultural understanding and universal peace and prosperity in this world and at the same time to develop our spiritual aspects of life in order to enjoy everlasting peace, happiness and ultimate success in the life Hereafter. Allâh the Most High says in His Glorious Book:

"But seek the wealth which Allâh has bestowed on you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion in this World. But do good, as Allâh has been good to you, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land; for Allâh loves not those who do mischief." (28:77)

"And when the prayer is finished, then may you disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of Allâh: and remember Allâh frequently that you may prosper." (62:10)

As part of Allâh's divine guidance, we also read in the Qur'ân the following brief but comprehensive supplication for a well-balanced life:

("Rabbana atina fey dunia hasanah wa feyl akhiratty hasanah waqina addab annar.") "Our Rabb! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter. And save us from the torment of the Fire!" (2:201)

Likewise, Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) taught us to supplicate to Allâh for a well-balanced life. Let us take guidance to supplicate for a well-balanced life from the following authentic *Ahâdîth*:

'Abdullâh bin Jabir (r.a.) narrated that he heard Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) say: "There is an hour during the night in which no Muslim individual will ask Allâh for good in this world and the next without His giving it to him; and that applies to every night." (Muslim 1654)

'Abdullâh bin As-Sa'ib (r.a.) narrated: "I heard Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said "Say between the two corners, 'O Allâh, bring us a blessing in this world and a blessing in the next and guard us from punishment of Hell.'" (Abu Dawud 1887)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said "Seventy angels have been put in charge of it (i.e. the Yamani corner), so if anyone says, 'O Allâh, I ask You for pardon and well-being in this world and the next; our Rabb, bring us a blessing in this world and a blessing in the next, and guard us from the punishment of Hell', they will say Ameen." (Tirmidhi 2590 and Ibn Majah)

Knowledge that teaches and develops the learners for a well-balanced life constitutes the relevant education that every sensible individual who truly wants success must strive for. It is the good education which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said is the best thing that a parent has to give to his child:

Amr bin Sa'id or Sa'id bin Al-'As (r.a.) narrated that Allâh' Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "A father gives his child nothing better than a good education." (Tirmidhi 4977 and Baihaqi)

Given the choice, however, between the life in this world and the life in the Hereafter, Islâm teaches us to choose the eternal life in the Hereafter. Islâm inspires the righteous believers with ultimate success in paradise and gives clear admonitions to the unbelievers of their severe and eternal punishments in the hell-fire. It guides mankind to know and understand that life in this world is nothing compared to the life in the Hereafter. Allâh, the Almighty, tells us:

"Nothing is the life of this world but play and amusement. But for better is the Home in the Hereafter for those who are pious. Will you not then understand?" (6:32)

"Allâh does enlarge, or grant by (strict) measure, the Sustenance (which He gives) to whom He pleases. They rejoice in the life of this world: but the life of this world is nothing but little comfort compared to the Hereafter." (13:26)

Allâh the Exalted emphasizes that the life of this world is deceiving (6:130). Many people love this fleeting life and neglect the Hereafter (75:20-21). Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter will suffer in the Fire in the Hereafter (11:15-16). Those who wish for the transitory things (of this life), Allâh will grant them such things as He wills, to such persons as He wills. In the end, however, He has provided for them punishment in Hell. They will burn therein, disgraced and rejected (17:18). Our Creator makes it clear that supreme success is the eternal life in Paradise and that the dwellers of Paradise are the ones who are indeed successful:

"For them Allâh has got ready Gardens (Paradise) under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever. That is the supreme success." (9:89)

"They will never taste death therein except the first death (of this world). And He will save them from the Torment of the Blazing Fire as a bounty from your Rabb! That will be the supreme success!" (44:56, 57)

"Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise. It is the dwellers of Paradise that will be successful." (59:20)

Education, to be effective, must have a relevant curriculum that develops the learners not only to enjoy the comfort of this material and temporary world but most of all to be spiritually and morally prepared for the eternal life Hereafter. Teachers and educators and everybody in the educational system must take admonition from the following *Ahâdîth*:

Abdullâh ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) said that if the people of knowledge were to preserve it and impart it to those who were worthy of it they will most certainly be the leaders of their age by virtue of it. But they passed it on to the people of the world to attain thereby some portion of their world, so they fell in their estimation. I heard Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) saying: "Whoever centers all his thoughts upon one object, viz. the thought of the Hereafter, Allâh will provide him with the worldly needs, and he whose whole distraction is worldly ends, Allâh does not care in what wilderness of the world he perishes." (Tirmidhi 263 and Ibn Majah)

Anas bin Malik and Zayd bin Thabit (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said "If anyone's intention is to seek the hereafter, Allâh will place his sufficiency in his heart and order his affairs, and the world will come to him submissively; but if anyone's intention is to seek worldly good Allâh will place poverty before him and disorder his affairs, and only so much of it as has been ordained for him will come to him." (Tirmidhi 5320, Ahmad and Darimi)

IV. The Need for Education Based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Knowing the importance of education, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) enjoined us to acquire knowledge and teach it to the people. The following authentic *Ahâdîth* tell us how our Great Teacher and Educator (s.a.w.s.) stressed the need for education based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

> ***`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. (The first is) a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one whom Allah has given wisdom (the Holy Qur'an) and he acts according to it and teaches it to others." (Bukhari, 1/73 and 1/255)***
>
> ***Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said "Learn the obligatory acts and the Qur'ân and teach them to the people, for I am a mortal." (Tirmidhi 244)***
>
> ***Abdullâh ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said to me, "Acquire the knowledge and impart it to the people. Acquire the knowledge of Fara'id (laws of inheritance) and teach it to the people. Learn the Qur'ân and teach it to the people; for I am a person who has to depart this world. And the knowledge will be taken away and turmoil will appear to such an extent that two people will not agree in regard to a case of inheritance distribution and find none who would decide between them." (Tirmidhi 279, Darimi and Daraqutni)***
>
> ***Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated...that Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz (r.a.) wrote to Abu Bakr bin Hazm, "Look for the knowledge of Hadîth and get it written, as I am afraid that religious knowledge will vanish and the religious learned men will pass away (die). Do not accept anything save the Ahâdîth of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Circulate knowledge and teach the ignorant, for knowledge does not vanish except when it is kept secretly (to oneself)." (Bukhâri 1/98)***

For our success, we need to learn knowledge as defined by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) -- i.e., one that is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the right deductions from these two revealed knowledge. Whatever authentic Islamic knowledge that we learn, we must make efforts, try our very best to share it to others.

V. Allâh Commends Those who are Endowed with Knowledge and Promises Them Everlasting Rewards

Allâh (swt) not only commands the whole mankind to seek knowledge but also commends those who are knowledgeable. He encourages the learned by promising them tremendous rewards. The following *Ayât* (Qur'anic Verses) state:

> ***"He grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted receives indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the Message but men of understanding." (2: 269)***
>
> ***"...Allâh will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and have been granted Knowledge. And Allâh is well-acquainted with all you do." (58:11)***

Allâh (swt) has honored and extolled the people who possess knowledge of Islâm. He has raised their status high by including them among with those who bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh. He the Almighty says:

> ***"Allâh bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He, and the angels, and those having knowledge (also bear witness to this); (He is always) maintaining His Creation in justice. None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Almighty the All-Wise." (3:18)***

In another verse, Allâh (swt) tells us *that "Only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allâh..."* (35:28). In return for their being god-fearing, Allâh is pleased with them. They receive Allâh's admonition. Allâh the Exalted tells us in His Book:

> ***"On the other hand for those who fear their Rabb are gardens with rivers flowing beneath therein are they to dwell (for ever) a gift from the presence of Allâh and that which is in the presence of Allâh is the best (bliss) for the righteous." (3:198)***

> ***"O you who believe! If you fear Allâh, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong) remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you and forgive you: for Allâh is the Rabb of grace unbounded." (8:29)***

> ***"As for those who fear their Rabb Unseen, for them is Forgiveness and a great Reward." (67:12)***

> **Is *then one who does know that, that which has been Revealed unto you from your Rabb is the Truth, like the one who is blind? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition; those who fulfill the Covenant of Allâh and fail not in their plighted word; those who join together those things, which Allâh has commanded to be joined, hold their Rabb in awe, and fear the terrible reckoning; those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Creator; establish regular prayers, spend out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (eternal) Home. Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation) "Peace unto you for that you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home!" (13:19-24)***

When we acquire knowledge of Islâm we learn not only the divine purpose why Allâh (swt) has created us but also understand the meaning of this temporary world, and how we should prepare our lives to enjoy the everlasting life in the hereafter. We know that only when we peacefully and completely submit to Allâh, believe and fear in Him, follow and obey His Messenger (s.a.w.s.), do righteous deeds for the sole purpose of pleasing Him alone, and subsequently refrain from committing sins do we attain salvation. When we acquire knowledge we are assured of Allâh's everlasting reward. We gain Allâh's protection from the terrible punishments in the hell-fire that await those who do not believe because they are devoid of wisdom. For our benefit we should strive to acquire knowledge of Islam because Allâh makes it very clear that those who know are not equal with those who do not know. He tells us:

> ***"Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his God—like one who does not? Say: 'Are those equal, those who know***

and those who do not know?" It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition.'" (39:9)

VI. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) Inspired Those who Acquire Knowledge of Islâm, the Scholars and Those Who Teach It to Others

In line with Allah's commandment for us to acquire knowledge of Islâm, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also inspired those who acquire knowledge of Islâm, the knowledgeable or the scholars and those who teach it to others. Let us take inspirations from the following narrations of *Ahâdîth*:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that...the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Those who were the best in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance will be the best in Islâm provided they comprehend the religious knowledge." (Bukhâri 4/572 and Muslim)

Abu Musa (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allâh has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allâh benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allâh's religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allâh has revealed through me. The Prophet learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allâh's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)." (Bukhâri 1/79)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that... the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "... He who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allâh will make that path easy, leading to Paradise for him and those persons who assemble in one of the houses of Allâh (mosques), recite the Book of Allâh and learn and teach the Qur'ân (among themselves). There will descend upon them tranquility, mercy will cover them, the angels will surround them and Allâh will mention them in the presence of those near Him. He who is slow-paced in doing good deeds, his (long) descent does not make him go ahead." (Muslim 6518)

Abu Umama (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "A learned person is as much above a worshipper as I am above the least of you. He added: Allâh, His angels and all those in Heavens and on Earth, even the ants in their hills and the fish in the water, call down blessings on those who instruct people in beneficial knowledge." (Tirmidhi 1392)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "Verily what a believer continues to receive (in the form of reward) for his action and his virtues after his death is the knowledge which he acquired and then disseminate; the pious son that he left behind him, or a copy of the Qur'ân which he left as a legacy, or the mosques that he had built, or the inn that he had built for the wayfarers, or the canal that he caused to flow, or a sadaqah which he gave out of his property in the state when he was healthy and alive. (These are the acts of goodness the reward of which) reaches him even after his death." (Tirmidhi 254 and Ibn Majah)

Abdullâh ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "There are two avaricious people who are never contented: the man of learning and the man of the world, but the two are not equal. The man of knowledge increases in submission to Allâh, and as for the man of the world, he becomes headstrong and defiant." Abdullâh then recited: 'Nay man is surely rebellious when he sees himself free from want.' (46:6). Concerning the other he recited the verse: 'Surely those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge, fear Allâh.' (35:28)." (Tirmidhi 261 and Darimi)

Abu Darda (r.a.) narrated that Kathir ibn Qays said, "I was sitting with Abu Darda' in the mosque of Damascus. A man came to him and said, "Abu Darda, I have come to you from the town of the Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) for a tradition that I have heard you relate from the Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.). I have come for no other purpose." He said, "I heard Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) say: 'If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allâh will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the heavens and the Earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion.'" (Abu Dawud 3634)

Al Hasan Al Basrit narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The superiority of a scholar, who observes the prescribed prayer and then sits down to teach people goodness, over the worshipper, who observes fast during the day and worships during the night, is like my superiority over the lowest in rank amongst you." (Tirmidhi 250)

Anas ibn Malik (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "Do you know who is most generous?" They said, "Allâh and His Messenger know best." Whereupon he said, "Allâh is the Most Generous, then I am most generous to mankind, and the most generous people after me would be those who will acquire knowledge and then disseminate it…" (Tirmidhi 259)

Hasan Al-Basri (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "He whom death overtakes while he is engaged in acquiring knowledge with a view to reviving Islâm with the help of it, there will be one degree between him and the Prophets in Paradise." (Tirmidhi 249 and Darimi)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that he heard Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) as saying: "He who comes to this mosque of mine and he comes only to learn or teach a khayr (good, i.e. the Qur'ân and the Sunnah), his status is like that of one who strives in the cause of Allâh. He who comes for any other motive, his status is like that of a person who covets the property of another." (Tirmidhi 742, Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi)

Uthman ibn Affan (r.a.) reported that Allah's Messenger said, "The most excellent amongst you is he who acquires knowledge of the Qur'an and then passes it on (to others)." (Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Hadith 212)

The narrated authentic *Ahâdîth* from the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are very inspiring. It is for us to follow them in order to attain the blessings and rewards that are associated to the acquisition and imparting of Islamic knowledge or in short, what the the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said as good education. We should be inspired to teach what we know of Islâm with the following *ayah:*

"But teach (the Message): for teaching benefits the Believers."   (51:55)

In line with our obligation to teach what we know of Islâm, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) encouraged us to teach and be good teachers:

Abdullâh ibn Amir (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) happened to pass by two groups (of Muslims) in the mosque and he said, "Both of them are good, but one is superior to the other. One group is supplicating Allâh and praying Him. If He so wills He will confer upon them and if He so wills He will withhold. So far as those who are acquiring the understanding of religion and its knowledge and are busy in teaching the ignorant, they are superior. Verily I have been sent as a teacher."   He then sat down amongst them. (Tirmidhi 257 and Darimi)

Abu Humamah Al- Bahili (r.a.) narrated that mention was made to Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) of two persons: the one being a devout, and the other being a scholar. Thereupon Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The superiority of the scholar over the devout is like my superiority over one who is of the lowest rank amongst you. Then Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "Verily (for the scholars) Allâh and His angels, the dwellers of the Heavens and of the Earth, even an ant in its hole and fish (in the depth of water) invoke blessings on one who teaches people goodness." (Tirmidhi 213)

With all the inspiring Islamic teachings on the virtues of learning and teaching what we know of Islam, it becomes imperative for us Muslims to strive hard to seek for Islamic knowledge the way our Prophet and Great Teacher (s.a.w.s.) taught us. We should continuously seek knowledge, no matter how young or old we are as to do so is a characteristic of a believer. The following *Hadîth* should inspire us to continuously seek for Islamic knowledge*:*

Abu Said Al-Khudri (r.a.) narrated that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "A believer is never satiated with gainful knowledge; he goes acquiring it till his death and entry into Paradise." (Tirmidhi 222)

It is for our success that we learn the knowledge (according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah) that our Great Educator (s.a.w.s.) taught us. Islamic knowledge is actually the best education because of its relevance to our success both in this world and the life Hereafter. What we know of Islam, it is imperative that we share it to others. We must further know that Islâm warns the learned among us from concealing our knowledge. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) admonished us as narrated in the following *Hadîth*:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "He who is asked about knowledge and conceals it will be bridled on the Day of Judgment with a bridle of fire." (Abu Dawud 3650, Tirmidhi and Ibn Maja)

VII. Non-Formal Education through *Da'wah*

We have to try teaching Islâm to the best of our capacity. We can teach Islam to others both through formal and non-formal education. Non-formal education includes: 1) conducting lectures to individual and/or groups; 2) writing books, articles, letters, etc. on Islam; 3) having Islamic website; 4) distributing reading materials (by e-mail or posts) that will enlighten others of the True Religion, Islam in its authentic form. In this manner they will learn to know Islam especially the worship of the Only True God, Allah and be able to obey adhere to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.).

An example of non-formal education is *Da'wah* or calling or inviting people to Islam for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. While Allâh (swt) makes it very clear that there is no compulsion in religion for Truth stands out clear from Error...(2:256) He, however, enjoins the Muslim believers to do *Da'wah* (to invite all to Islâm) in order to lead the whole mankind to the true and perfect religion. He (swt) commands:

> *"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity." (3:104)*

> *"Invite (all) to the Way of your Rabb (i.e., Islâm) with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Rabb knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance." (16:125)*

In line with the Qur'ânic injunctions to do *Da'wah*, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also enjoined us to invite others to Islâm:

> *Abu Bakra (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said ... "It is incumbent upon those who are present to convey this message (of mine) to those who are absent. May be that some of those to whom it will be conveyed will understand it better than those who have actually heard it." (Bukhâri 5/688, 1/67 and 2/797)*

> *Abdullâh Bin 'Amr (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single Ayah (verse)..." (Bukhâri 4/667)*

We should be inspired to do *Da'wah*. Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) not only encouraged us to seek knowledge in order to convey Islâm to others but also invoked prayer for those who learn and transmit Islâmic knowledge to others:

> *Abdullâh Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "May Allâh be well pleased with the servant who heard our words, remembered them, retained them well and then passed them on to others. How many scholars are there who are the scholars of religion without having an understanding of it, and how many scholars of religion are there who convey knowledge to those who are well versed compared with them. There are three things on account of which no rancor enters a Muslim heart: the sincerity of purpose for Allâh's sake, seeking goodness for the Muslims and adhering to their main body (jama'ah), for their prayers encompass them all round." (Tirmidhi 228)*

If we do *Da'wah* for the pleasure of Allâh, our only Rabb (Cherisher and Sustainer) will reward us prosperous lives. Allâh the Exalted not only commends those who call people to Islâm (41:33 and 103:1-3) but subsequently promises unlimited rewards to them (39:33-35). Allâh the Most High says:

> *"Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allâh, works righteousness, and says, 'I am one of the Muslims?'" (41:33)*

> *"And he who brings the Truth and he who confirms (and supports) it—such are the men who do right. They shall have all that they wish for, with their Rabb. Such is the reward of those who do good: so that Allâh will remit from them (even) the worst in their deeds and give them their reward according to the best of what they have done." (39:33-35)*

Doing da'wah to others, means that we are doing a good deed worthy of Allah's rewards. This

is one way to help others be guided to Islâm and thus, attains Allah's pleasure and rewards. We learn from the following authentic *Ahâdîth*:

Abu Mas'ud Al-Ansari (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "…One who guides to something good has a reward similar to that of its doer." (Muslim 4/4665)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "He who called people to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who called (people) to error, he shall have to carry (the burden) of its sin, like those who committed it, without their sins being diminished in any respect." (Muslim 4/6470)

One of the basic knowledge in Islâm that we should remember is to do *Da'wah* according to the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah.* The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) just like other prophets and messengers of Allâh before him, invited people to the worship of One God, Allâh). Let us be reminded with the following Qur'anic injunctions and authentic *Hadith:*

"Say (O Muhammad): 'O men! I am sent unto you all, as Allâh's Messenger to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He. So believe in Allâh and His Messenger...'" (7:158)

"Say, 'He is Allâh the One. The Eternally besought of all. He begets not nor was He begotten and there is none comparable unto Him.'" (112: 1-4)

Ibn Abbas (r.a.) narrated that when Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) sent Mu'adh to Yemen, he said (to him), "You are going to people of the Book. First of all invite them to worship Allâh (Alone) and when they come to know Allâh, inform them that Allâh has enjoined on them, five prayers in every day and night; and if they start offering these prayers, inform them that Allâh has enjoined on them, the Zakat (charity). And it is to be taken from the rich amongst them and given to the poor amongst them; and if they obey you in that, take Zakat from them and avoid (don't take) the best property of the people as Zakat." (Bukhâri 2/537)

In conveying the Message of Islâm, Allâh's Messenger *(s.a.w.s.)* never resorted to any other book or source of knowledge and guidance but the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* (both divine scriptures and guidance from Allâh (swt). In fact, he rebuked one of his closest companions by trying to refer to the Torah.

Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (r.a.) narrated that 'Umar ibn Al-Khattâb (r.a.) brought to Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) a copy of the Torah and said, "Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) this is a copy of the Torah." He (s.a.w.s.) kept quiet and he ('Umar) began to read it. The (color) of the face of Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) underwent a change; whereupon Abû Bakr (r.a.) said, "Would that your mother mourn you, don't you see the face of Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.)?" 'Umar (r.a.) saw the face of Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and said, "I seek refuge with Allâh from the wrath of Allâh and the wrath of His Messenger." We are well pleased with Allâh as Rabb, with Islâm as religion, and with Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) as Prophet. "Whereupon Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "By Him in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, even if Moses were to appear before you and you were to follow him, leaving me aside, you would certainly stray into error. If (Moses) were alive (now), and he found my prophethood, he would have definitely followed me." (Tirmidhî 194, Darimi and Mishkât 1/20)

The above *Hadîth* shows how the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) abhorred the use of other sources (of

religious knowledge) other than what he has left us. As reported in other *hadîth* the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) stressed that we should always stick to the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the four righteously guided Caliphs. To be effective, Allâh the Exalted commands us to do *Da'wah* with wisdom and beautiful preaching. Allâh the Most High says:

> *"Invite (all) to the Way of your Rabb with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Rabb knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance." (16:125)*

> *"And do not argue with the People of the Book unless it be in a way that is better, save with such of them as do wrong. But say, "We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you. Our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we submit (in Islâm)." (29:46)*

The above verses also imply that as much as possible we have to avoid argumentation and debate. It is always best to invite people to Islâm with kind words instead of evil and insulting words. Allâh (swt) says:

> *"Kind words and forgiving of faults are better than charity followed by injury. And Allâh is Rich (Free of all wants) and He is most Forbearing." (2:263)*

> *"Allâh does not love the utterance of evil words in public except by one who has been wronged. Allâh is He Who hears and knows all things." (4:148)*

Certainly utterance of evil words is from Satan. Allâh (swt) further tells us:

> *"Say to My servants that they should (only) say those things that are best: for Satan does sow dissension among them: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy." (17:53)*

To avoid argumentation and debate, we should refrain from making use of the Bible and other sources that claimed to be "the Word of God" or "inspired". The use of the Bible in doing *Da'wah* to Christians, in most cases, turns the *Da'wah* session or lecture into argumentation and debate. Instead of listening, most Christian audience naturally become defensive; thereby, creating an unfriendly atmosphere. Once we resort to Bible, we allow Satan to interfere in the course of our *Da'wah*. As much as possible, we *Du'at* must refrain from quoting verses from the Bible as it is not the Divine Message from Allâh (swt). Allâh the Almighty has commanded us to obey Him and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.). He has enjoined upon us to know that His Messenger's duty was to convey the Message in the clearest manner, which he successfully did for our guidance:

> *"Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger and beware (of evil): if you do turn back know you that it is Our Messenger's duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest manner." (5:92)*

> *"(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Scriptures and We have sent down unto you (O, Muhammad also) the Message; that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought." (16:44)*

> *"How should they have the reminder. Seeing that a Messenger explaining things clearly has (already) come to them." (44:13)*

> *Anas (r.a.) narrated that whenever the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with*

greeting." (Bukhâri 1/95)

'Aishah (radhiallâhu anha) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) used to talk so clearly that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so." (Bukhâri 4/768 and Muslim)

Furthermore, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) advised us to speak what is good and not to hurt or insult others. He also enjoined us not to be angry:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "Whoever believes in Allâh and the last day should talk what is good or keep quiet; and whoever believes in Allâh and the last day should not hurt (or insult his neighbor; and whoever believes in Allâh and the last day should entertain his guest generously." (Bukhâri 8/ 485 and Muslim 3/ 4286)

'Aishah (radhiallâhu anha) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "The most hated person in the sight of Allâh is the most quarrelsome person." (Bukhâri 8/ 637)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." (Bukhâri 8 /135 and Muslim 4/6311-6314)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that a man said to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), "Advise me! The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Do not be angry and furious." The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, "Do not be angry and furious." (Bukhâri 8/137)

VIII. Supplications for Useful Knowledge

For our complete success, we must strive hard to learn authentic knowledge of Islam, which is the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the right deductions from these two revealed sources of knowledge. In this way, we can practice it correctly and share what we know of Islam to others -- all for the pleasure of Allâh the Almighty. Let us supplicate to Allah for knowledge and wisdom with the supplications from the Qur'an and authentic *Ahâdîth:*

"Rabbi zidni ilma." ("O my Rabb! Increase me in knowledge.") (20:114)

"Rabbi habliy hukman, walhiqniy bissaalihiyn, waj-'aliy lisana ssidqin fiyl akhirin, waj-'alniy miw warathati jannatin na'im." ("O my Rabb! Bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous; grant me honorable mention on the tongue of truth among the latest (generations); make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss.") (26:83-84)

Umm Salamah (Radhiallâhu anha) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) used to say after the dawn prayer, "Allâhumma inni as'aluka 'ilman naafi'an, wa rizqan tayyiban, wa 'amalan mutaqabbalan." ("O Allâh, I ask You for beneficial knowledge, acceptable action, and good provision.") (Tirmidhi 2487, Ahmad and Ibn Majah, Ibn As-Sunni, no. 54, Ibn Mâjah no. 920. Its chain of transmission is good (Hasan), Ibn Al-Qaiyim 2/375)

'Aishah (radhiallâhu anha) narrated that when Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) awake at night, he said, "There is no god but You, glory be to You, O Allâh, I ask Your pardon for my sin and I ask You for Your mercy. O Allâh! Advance me in knowledge: do not cause

my heart to deviate (from guidance) after You have guided me, and grant me mercy from Yourself; verily, You are the Grantor." (Abu Dawud 5043)

We must pray to Allâh for knowledge of Islâm and other knowledge that would benefit us not only in this temporary world, but also in the eternal world to come, which we need to consider more important. When we pray to Allâh for other knowledge outside of Islâm, we should pray that such knowledge is beneficial for us. The knowledge that we seek outside Islâmic knowledge must strengthen our understanding and application of Islâm. It should make us better Muslims and not to be out of Islâm. We must, therefore, refrain from knowledge that does not benefit us. We should take admonition from the following *Ahâdîth*:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "It is part of the excellence of a person's Islâm that he should discard that which is of no benefit to him either in this world or the Hereafter." (Tirmidhi 67)

Abu Darda (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The worst of men in the eyes of Allâh on the Day of Resurrection will be the scholar who does not derive benefit from his knowledge." (Tirmidhi 268)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure out of which nothing is spent in the cause of Allâh." (Tirmidhi 280)

As much as possible, we must seek Allâh's protection from the knowledge that will just destroy our faith. We must include in our prayers and supplications to Allâh the Almighty that He will protect us from such knowledge that does not benefit us for our eternal success in the world to come. This is a guidance that we must follow from the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as narrated in the following *Ahâdîth*:

Sa'id ibn Arkam (r.a.) narrated: "I am not going to say anything but only that which Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) used to supplicate: 'O Allâh, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, from sloth, from cowardice, from miserliness, decrepitude and from torment of the grave. O Allâh, grant to my soul the sense of righteousness and purify it, for You are the Best Purifier thereof. You are the Protecting friend thereof, and Guardian thereof. O Allâh, I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which does not benefit, from the heart that does not entertain the fear (of Allâh), from the soul that does not feel contented and the supplication that is not responded.'" (Muslim 6568)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that Messenger of Allâh used to say: "O Allâh, I seek refuge in You from four things: knowledge which does not profit, a heart which is not submissive, a soul which has an insatiable appetite, and a supplication which is not heard." (Abu Dawud 1543)

With supplications for useful knowledge and wisdom, Islam proves to be a complete guidance for mankind. It offers the best education with relevant curriculum that develops every learner to have a well-balanced life -- a life that guides everyone who sincerely submits to Allah in Islam (according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah) to attain success, especially supreme success in the eternal world to come.

IX. Conclusions and Recommendations

All the Qur'anic injunctions and authentic *Ahâdîth* that inspire and enjoin every Muslim to

seek for knowledge for the pleasure of Allah (swt) indicate the need for Islamic education purely based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Everyone in the society needs to play active role in establishing schools, colleges and universities or at least learning centers and institutions where everyone (male or female, young or old) can learn authentic knowledge of Islam. This is imperative as Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.), the world's Great Teacher and Educator, has made seeking of knowledge an obligation to each and every Muslim (male or female):

> ***Anas Ibn Malik (r.a.) reported that Allâh's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "Seeking of knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim (male or female)..." (Ibn Majah 1/224 and Tirmidhi 218)***

Muslim educators, curriculum and educational policy makers need to understand the importance of education in truly developing every learner's total personality development for a well-balanced life. It is the quality of life that guides one who sincerely believes and does righteous deeds in Islam to attain success, especially supreme success in the eternal life to come. They need to make the curriculum relevant to the needs of mankind by teaching the real Islam -- one that is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah or authentic *Ahâdîth* of the world's Great Educator, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). This is an obligatory duty that needs to be fulfilled because as leaders in the field of education, they are accountable to provide the learners the necessary knowledge in fulfilling their very purpose in life -- to worship Allah until death or throughout their lives. They need to remember that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) enjoined us to fulfill our accountabilities or duties to those who are under our care and responsibilities:

> ***Abdullah ibn Umar (r.a.) reported that he heard the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) saying: "Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. A man is a guardian of his father's property and is responsible for it so all of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and things under your care (trust)." (Bukhari, 2/592, 3/73, 7/128 and Muslim Hadith 4496)***

Muslim educators, curriculum and policy makers must fulfill their duties to make education more relevant and responsive to the needs of the Muslim learners. They need to take admonition from the following hadith in which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) warned those who are entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims but do not do their duties to uplift their (material and spiritual) well-being. In the life Hereafter they will be denied of entrance to Paradise:

> ***It is narrated on the authority of Abu Malih that Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad visited Ma'qil ibn Yasar in his illness. Ma'qil said to him: I am narrating to you a Hadith which I would have never narrated to you had I not been in death-bed. I hear Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) say: "A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims, but he makes no endeavors (for the material and moral uplift) and does not sincerely mean (their welfare) would not enter Paradise along with them." (Muslim, 1/ 264)***

Verily, the best service that a ruler can offer to his people is Islamic education based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Likewise, educators, curriculum and educational policymakers can best fulfill their obligations if they design Islamic curriculum based on authentic knowledge of Islam.

Establishment of Islamic education (one that is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah) is not only the responsibility of the educators, curriculum and educational policymakers. It is the responsibility of all. Everyone in the society, the parents, teachers, learners, the government officials and its people must unite, pull their resources (be it physical, intellectual, social assets, etc.) together to come up with educational schools, institutions and universities that teach Islamic education relevant to the goal that Allah the Almighty has set for all mankind. Everyone needs to make a contribution towards Islam as Allah promises great rewards to any one who supports in bringing the Truth:

> ***"And he who brings the Truth and he who confirms (and supports) it — such are the men who do right. They shall have all that they wish for, with their Rabb (Only Cherisher and Sustainer). Such is the reward of those who do good: so that Allah will remit from them (even) the worst in their deeds and give them their reward according to the best of what they have done." (39:33-35)***
>
> ***"O you who believe if you will support (the cause of) Allah, He will support you, and will make your foothold firm." (47:7)***
>
> ***Khuraym Bin Fatik (r.a.) narrated that Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.s.) said, "If anyone makes a contribution towards Allah's path, seven hundred times as much will be recorded to his credit." (Tirmidhi 3826, 1343 and Nasa'i)***

Schools, colleges and universities offering authentic knowledge of Islam (especially in Muslim countries) need to open their services to other Muslims and non-Muslims who are interested to learn authentic knowledge of Islam. This can be done through the following:

1) giving more scholarships to poor but deserving students from other countries, especially those who do not have access to Islamic education, to study in their universities;

2) establishing branches to other countries so that the students do not have to travel;

3) establish linkages with other universities to offer their Islamic curriculum and other resources;

4) offer Islamic Studies in the English language so that non-Arab speaking learners can easily understand and learn Islam;

5) reach out worldwide using the Internet to offer online courses or establish open Islamic schools, colleges and universities both in the English and Arabic language at affordable or minimal costs in order to accommodate many poor but deserving students from various countries;

6) work seriously to Islamize subjects outside the Qur'an and Sunnah courses, which are useful in developing learner's knowledge and skills for a well-balanced life; and

7) organize themselves to come up with an international accrediting organization (e.g., World Accreditation of Islamic Schools, Colleges and Universities) that gives accreditation or academic recognition to Islamic institutions that offer Islamic curriculum based on authentic sources (i.e., Qur'an and Sunnah).

Muslim educators, curriculum and policy makers from various countries offering the right Islamic curriculum need to seriously consider organizing themselves into one body that scrutinizes or reviews the curriculum of interested institutions to be members of the

international Islamic accrediting organization. The said organization will only recognize or give accreditation to institutions upon appropriate review (i.e., make revisions, corrections suggestions) of the curriculum based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The very proof of this is the fact that the Qur'an is the Criterion (2:185 and 3:3-4). In fact, *Al-Furqan* which means the Criterion is another name for the Qur'an. It means "that which distinguishes truth from falsehood and right from wrong." Chapter 25 of the Qur'an is called *Surah Al-Furqan*. It starts with the following verse:

> *"Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner." (Qur'an, 25:1)*

By implementing the suggestion to have an international accrediting organization of Islamic institutions and universities, Muslims who truly adhere to the Qur'an and the Sunnah as well as those who want to follow True Islam will be guided to the right Islamic institutions. They will be protected from taking Islamic Studies in various universities, especially in the west and non-Islamic countries that offer Islamic Studies and similar fields, which are not actually based on authentic knowledge of Islam.

In addition, private individuals, organizations and institutions who are educationally and economically capable to establish Islamic schools, colleges and universities based on the right Islamic curriculum can be accredited worldwide through the international Islamic accreditation organization. This will encourage more Muslims, especially those in non-Muslim countries or Muslim countries but are governed by secular educational policy-makers, to establish more Islamic schools and institutions.

It is time to come up with international Islamic accreditation organization so that Muslims will not be dependent with existing non-Muslim accrediting associations. Muslims need to have an international independent body to accredit Islamic schools, colleges and universities worldwide. Accreditation must be based on the authenticity of the curriculum and the learning materials (textbooks and references), quality and effectiveness of teaching methodologies as well as delivery method of instructions, and qualifications of teachers and professors. All these will contribute toward quality, relevant and responsive Islamic education -- the kind of education that will awaken mankind to adhere to the Qur'an and the Sunnah; and thus, develop every learner who studies Islam with the best personality for a well-balanced life and success.

To attain more responsive and relevant education for all Muslims and non-Muslims who are interested to learn the Truth and attain success, Muslims need to: 1) increase their Faith by learning Islam in its purest form; 2) apply the knowledge in their day to day lives; 3) unite, help one another, full their resources together to share knowledge of Islam to others (Muslims and non-Muslims); and 4) be patient and consistent in the course of learning Islam, applying it, organizing or joining together to be able to share authentic Islamic knowledge to others and the rest of mankind. In this way Muslims, by the Grace of Allah, will become assets to their respective societies in promoting well-balanced life; and hence, development in this world and supreme success in the eternal world. This is a divine guidance that Allah the Exalted gives us when He says:

> *"By the time, verily man is in loss, except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and join together in the mutual enjoining of Truth, and of patience and constancy." (Qur'an, 103:1-3)*

Time has come that we Muslims must be conscious of our duty to Allah (swt) to worship Him sincerely according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah by working together to implement Islamic

Education in its purest form. In this way, we attain success both in this world and in the eternal life Hereafter.

May Allah, the Almighty, bless all mankind with Islam by making the Qur'an and the Sunnah prevail in all existing Islamic schools, colleges and universities worldwide. May He accept this work as a good deed worthy of His rewards, especially in the Hereafter and save my parents, my family, Muslims who in one way or the other have contributed in this work, those who follow and invite others to follow the Prophet (s.a.w.s) and me from the torment of the Hell-Fire. *Ameen.*

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